



# The Secret of Mary

*(Third Edition.)*

# The Secret of Mary

OR

Letter on the Slavery  
of the Blessed Virgin

BY

BLESSED LOUIS MARIE GRIGNON  
DE MONTFORT.

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## Note.

Louis Grignon de la Bacheleraie was born at Montfort-sur-Meu, a little town in Breton, on January 31st, 1673. In Confirmation he took the name of Mary as a token of his love for Our Lady; later, when going to Paris to complete his course of studies for the priesthood, he renounced his family name, and took that of his birthplace, so that he is known as Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort. He founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Wisdom, and later, his desire for priests who would fight under the name and standard of Mary, led to the formation of the Company of Mary. Owing to the fact that his first Missionaries were trained at the Seminary of the Holy Ghost, and also, because the Chapel of their Mother-house is dedicated to the Holy Ghost, the priests of the Company of Mary were for a long time known as Missionaries of the Holy Ghost.

Worn out with labour, the holy Missionary was obliged to retire for a time to a small house at St. Elei, and there he composed his treatise on true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and drew up the rules for the Missionaries of the Company of Mary and for the Daughters of Wisdom.

He died in 1716 at the age of forty-three. Pope Leo XIII. declared him "Blessed" in 1888.

MATTHAEUS MACMAHON,

*Censor Theol. Deput.*

IMPRIMI POTEST :

✠ EDUARDUS,

*Archiep. Dublinen.,*

*Hiberniæ Primas*

Die 19 Nov., 1926.

## Some Opinions on the Treatise of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Pope Pius X. wrote as follows about Blessed de Montfort's Treatise on true devotion to Mary: "We urgently recommend Blessed de Montfort's marvellous treatise on true devotion to the Blessed Virgin and impart our Apostolic Benediction to all its readers."

Cardinal Vannutelli of Rome calls it a "wonderful book," and says: "I pray that this devotion be spread everywhere."

Father August Lehmkuhl, S.J., after quoting a part of Blessed de Montfort's treatise, thus expresses himself: "What can be truer than these principles of Blessed Grignon? And if they are true, what can be more desirable, in these times of ours in which indifference for Christ and His Church has spread throughout the world, than to possess in the devotion to Mary so excellent a means to lead souls back again to Christ?"

Father Faber writes: "Mary's position given her by true theology is entirely too little known, and therefore greatly decreases veneration of the Mother of God. Hence it is that Jesus is not loved, that Protestants are not converted, that the Church is not exalted, that souls are not sanctified, that the sacraments are not rightly frequented, or souls evangelized, Jesus is obscured because Mary is

kept in the background. Thousands of souls perish because Mary is withheld from them. It is the miserable unworthy shadow which we call devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that is the cause of all these wants and blights, these evils and declines.

"God is pressing for a greater, a wider, a stronger devotion to His Blessed Mother. I cannot think of a higher work or a broader vocation for anyone, than the simple spreading of this peculiar devotion of Bl. Grignon de Montfort. Let a man but try it for himself, and his surprise at the graces it brings with it, and the transformations it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men, and for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. O, if Mary were but known, there would be no coldness to Jesus then ! O, if Mary were but known, how much more wonderful would be our faith, and how different would our Communions be ! O, if Mary were but known, how much happier, how much holier, how much less worldly should we be ! and how much more should we be living images of our sole Lord and Saviour, her dearest and most blessed Son !

"May the Holy Ghost, the Divine Zealot of Jesus and Mary, deign to give a new blessing to this work ; and may He please to console us with the speedy coming of that great age of the Church which is to be the Age of Mary !"

## Preface.

"LE SECRET DE MARIE" is merely a summary, written by Blessed de Montfort, of his larger work on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, together with some explanatory notes. The present work is *Le Secret de Marie* done into English. The translator has done her work well, and has succeeded in retaining, in the translation, all the charm, beauty and clearness of the original. May this little book go forth with God and Mary's blessing—may it make Jesus and His Blessed Mother better known and better loved. May it induce thousands and thousands to become Mary's slaves, and may each of these be inspired to spread the devotion by urging others to join this happy bondage and so help on that glorious work so dear to the heart of de Montfort—the extension of the reign of Jesus by the increase of devotion to Mary.

S. OF M.

*Feast of the Annunciation, 1926.*



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## Letter on the Slavery of the Blessed Virgin

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'To serve Mary and to follow her is the greatest honour to which we can attain.'

—ST. JOHN DAMASCENE.

'Come to Mary! To be near her is good; to remain long with her is better; but to be always with her is the very best.'

—ST. PETER DAMIAN.

"Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to magnify the Lord, and the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God."

—ST. AMBROSE.

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### IMPORTANCE OF THIS DEVOTION.

Chosen Soul, here is a secret that the Most High has taught me, and which I have never been able to find in any book, either ancient or modern.<sup>1</sup> I confide to you by the Holy Ghost, on condition:

1. That you do not communicate it except to those whose prayers, alms, mortifications, persecutions, detachment, and zeal

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<sup>1</sup> The holy slavery of Jesus through Mary was, without doubt, known before the time of Blessed de Montfort. Nevertheless, he is justified in styling it *a secret*; first, because like everything supernatural, it encloses a hidden treasure, one that grace alone can disclose to us, and enable us to appreciate; and, secondly, because only a few go beyond its outward practices and enter into its real spirit. He could also truly say he had never found this secret in any book, either ancient or modern, for this devotion was never before so fully explained or developed as a special form of spiritual life.

for the salvation of souls<sup>1</sup> render worthy of it.

2. That you make use of it to become holy and heavenly; for this secret becomes great only in proportion to the use a soul makes of it. Beware, therefore, of standing idle with your arms folded, for my secret would then be but poison to you, and tend to your destruction.

3. On condition that you will thank God, all the days of your life, for the grace He has bestowed on you in teaching you a secret you do not deserve to know.

Just in proportion to the use you make of it in the **ordinary** actions of your life, you will come to understand the price and excellence of this secret, which at first, owing to the gravity of your sins, and your secret attachment to self,<sup>2</sup> you will grasp but imperfectly.

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<sup>1</sup> These words show the esteem in which Blessed de Montfort held this devotion. Are there not secrets in every art and craft, held in reserve for those capable of appreciating them and of making use of them? In the same way is it not right that this secret of sanctity should be confided only to those anxious to attain to perfection? And so, obedient to the injunction of Our Lord against desecration of holy things (Matt. vii.), Blessed Grignon reserves this devotion with a jealous care, that is, in reality, only the respect due to a gift of God.

<sup>2</sup> These few words contain three important points of advice: 1. This devotion is to be applied to everyday actions, as much as to the more important ones of our lives. 2. It is by a persevering practice, and not by a mere trial for a few weeks, that one is able to judge of its excellence and its fruits. 3. To be able to appreciate it,

Before yielding to a natural and impetuous desire to learn this truth, kneel down and say devoutly the *Ave Maris Stella* and the *Veni Creator*, (pp. 58, 60) to ask of God the grace to understand and appreciate this divine mystery.<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the little time I have for writing, and you for reading, I will say everything as briefly as possible.

### NECESSITY OF LABOURING FOR OUR SANCTIFICATION.

Soul, living image of God, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, the Will of God regarding you is that you become holy like Him in this life, and glorious like Him in the next. To attain to the holiness of God is therefore your real vocation. All your thoughts, words and actions, your sufferings, every event of your life ought to tend to this end. Otherwise you will be resisting God by not doing that

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it is also necessary to avoid sin and renounce secret attachments which are obstacles to it.

<sup>1</sup> Be sure not to look upon this admonition as to prayer as a mere commonplace recommendation of no consequence. If there are many who are not admitted to the "secret" of this devotion, it is because they forget that in order to enter into this Garden Enclosed, Mary, it is necessary to implore earnestly the help of the Holy Ghost, Who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—(Cor. ii, 10.) See on this subject the first advice given in the *Tree of Life*, (p. 45); and the end of the Prayer to Jesus, (p. 49.)

for which He created you, and for which He continues to preserve you.<sup>1</sup>

Oh, what an admirable work! Dust changed into light, filth into purity, sin into sanctity, the creature into its Creator, man into God! Oh! an admirable work, I say again, but one difficult in itself and impossible to mere nature. God by His grace, and by an abundant and extraordinary grace at that, alone can accomplish it, for the creation of the whole world is not as great or as wonderful a work as is the sanctification of a soul.

### MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

Soul, what will you do? What means will you employ to mount up to where God is calling you? The means of attaining salvation and holiness are known to all. They are mentioned in the Gospel, explained by the Masters of the spiritual life, practised by the Saints, and are necessary to everyone who desires to attain salvation and to arrive at perfection. They are humility of heart, continual prayer, morti-

<sup>1</sup> Like all the Masters of the spiritual life, Blessed de Montfort reminds beginners that the cultivation of their interior life ought to be their ruling thought and principal occupation. They must work at it with a strong determination to succeed, no matter what sacrifice it may demand. Compare these words with the second advice on the cultivation of the *Tree of Life*, p. 45.

fication in all things, abandonment to Divine Providence, and conformity to the Will of God.

To practise these means of salvation and holiness, the grace of God is absolutely necessary. No one can doubt that sufficient grace is given to each one, in a greater or less degree. I say in a greater or less degree, for though God in His infinite goodness gives sufficient grace to each one, He does not give to all in equal measure. The faithful soul with great grace performs a great act, and with less grace a lesser act. On the value and excellence of the grace bestowed by God and corresponded with by the soul, depend the value and excellence of our actions. These principles are incontestable. The important thing, therefore, is to find an easy means of obtaining from God the grace which is necessary to enable us to become saints. It is this I wish to teach you. Now, I say that **to find this grace of God, it is necessary to find Mary.**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is this means of finding the grace of God that characterises the devotion of Blessed de Montfort, and makes it a special form of spiritual life.

## THE OFFICE AND THE PREROGATIVES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.<sup>1</sup>

1. Mary alone found grace before God, both for herself and for each individual soul. Neither the Patriarchs, Prophets nor Saints of the Old Law were able to attain this grace.

2. It is Mary who has given being and life to the Author of all grace, and this is why she is called the Mother of Grace—*Mater Gratiae*.

3. God the Father, from Whom, as from their fountain-head, proceeds every perfect gift and every grace, in giving His Son to Mary, has given her all His graces, so that, as St. Bernard says, the Will of God has been given to her in Him and with Him.

4. God has chosen Mary to be the Treasurer, the Steward, the Dispenser of all His graces, so that all His graces and all His gifts pass through her hands. And so, according to St. Bernardine, through the power thus received, **she gives to whom she wills, as she wills, when she wills, and as much as she wills**, the graces of

<sup>1</sup> The reasons here summarised to show that Mary is the most perfect way of finding Jesus, condense the whole teaching of theology concerning the Blessed Virgin. By meditating on them, the faithful will come to a better understanding of the part which the Blessed Virgin, in virtue of her Divine Maternity, held in the Incarnation, and since then, in the Church.

the Eternal Father, the virtues of Jesus Christ, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

5. Just as, in the order of nature, a child must have father and mother, so, in the order of grace, a true child of the Church has God for his Father, and Mary for his Mother. And, should he boast of having God for his Father, without at the same time having the tender love of a true child for Mary, he does but deceive himself, for his father is the devil.

6. Since Jesus Christ, the Head of the predestinate was formed in Mary, in her must also be formed the members of that Head, that is to say, all true Christians. For a mother does not form the head without the members, nor the members without the head. Whoever, then, wishes to be a member of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, must be formed in Mary by the grace of Jesus Christ, which dwells in her in plenitude in order to be communicated bounteously to the true members of Jesus Christ and to her true children<sup>1</sup>.

7. The Holy Ghost having never repudiated Mary, whom He espoused, and

<sup>1</sup> If we call Mary our Mother we do so, not alone out of a feeling of gratitude and love in return for her love and care for us, but because she is as really our mother, in the order of grace, as she is the Mother of Christ, in the order of nature. This spiritual maternity of Mary, the consequence of her Divine Maternity is one of the truths on which the devotion of Blessed de Montfort is founded

in whom, by whom and from whom He produced that Masterpiece, Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, continues daily, in a mysterious but nevertheless real manner to produce His elect in her, and by her.

8. Mary has received from God a special dominion over souls in order to nourish them and make them grow in God. St. Augustine even says that all the predestinate are in the womb of Mary, and that they are not born until their good Mother brings them forth into life eternal. And so it is that as the child draws all its nourishment from its mother, who gives to it in proportion to its weakness, the elect also draw all their spiritual nourishment and all their strength from Mary.

9. It is to Mary God the Father has said: *In Jacob Inhabita*: "My daughter, let thy dwelling be in Jacob," that is to say, in My elect typified by Jacob. It is to Mary God the Son has said: *In Israel Haereditare*: "My dear Mother, let thine inheritance be in Israel," that is to say, in the predestinate. In fine, it is to Mary that the Holy Ghost has said: *In Electis Meis Mitte radices*: "Strike thy roots My faithful Spouse in My chosen ones." Who-soever then is elect and predestinate has the Blessed Virgin dwelling in him, that is

to say, in his soul,<sup>1</sup> in which he allows her to plant the roots of profound humility, of ardent charity and of every virtue.

### HOW MARY FORMS JESUS IN US.

Mary is called by St. Augustine, and is in reality, the living mould of God, *forma Dei*. It was in her alone the God-Man was formed, without losing a single feature of His Godhead, and it is also in her alone that man can be transformed by the grace of Jesus Christ into the nature of God, in so far as that is possible for human nature. A sculptor may make a statue, or may represent nature in two ways. First, with the help of good instruments he may, by his skill, strength, hard work and professional knowledge, chisel it out of some hard

<sup>1</sup> A word of explanation may be given as to Mary living in our souls. Her presence in us is in no way comparable with that of God living in the soul by grace, and making it participate in His Divine Life. Neither are we to believe that the Blessed Virgin is in our souls *in person*. And so the accusation of certain Protestants that Blessed de Montfort implied the omnipresence of Mary is absolutely false. At the same time we must remember that under the title of Mother of God (a title which is hers personally and exclusively), Mary sees our souls, and is with us really, individually and intimately in a way more complete and more excellent than are the angels and saints in heaven. Hence we are present to her, and she is morally present to us, for by her prayers, watchfulness and influence, she acts in union with the Holy Ghost in the forming of Jesus in our souls. In the same way we may say that the sun, is in a place in which its light and its warmth penetrate even though it is not there itself.

and shapeless material; or, secondly, he may cast it in a mould. The first way is long and difficult, and liable to many accidents. It often happens that a single blow of the chisel or the hammer, awkwardly given, is enough to spoil the whole work. The second way is quick, easy, and gentle, causing hardly any trouble or expense, provided, of course, that the mould be without flaws, and exactly represents the model, and that the material used is easy to be handled and in no way resists the process.<sup>1</sup>

Mary is the great mould of God, made by the Holy Ghost in order to form a God-Man by the Hypostatic union, and by grace a Man-God. In this mould no feature of the Godhead is wanting. Whosoever is thrown into it, and allows himself to be freely handled, receives therein the likeness of Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> true God. The manner

<sup>1</sup> A great docility is therefore necessary to allow oneself to be formed by the Blessed Virgin, if we desire that our formation be quick, easy and gentle. This comparison of the mould explains very clearly the interior practice of this devotion. It consists essentially in *one only act*—absolute submission to Mary—that we apply under various forms and conditions to all our life, both exterior and interior. Such is the simplicity of the method of Blessed de Montfort.

<sup>2</sup> Although the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity live in our souls by grace, we nevertheless say, in the words of St. Paul, "that Christ liveth in us," not in the sense that His Holy Humanity is in us (for this

of this moulding is gentle, and proportioned to human weakness without much pain or labour. It is safe and without fear of illusion, for where Mary is the devil has never had, and never will have, access. Lastly, it is done in a manner all holy and immaculate, without the shadow of the least stain of sin. Oh, what a difference there is between the soul which has been formed in Jesus Christ by the ordinary ways of those who, like sculptors, trust to their mere natural skill, and rely on their own efforts, and the soul which, really docile, really detached, thoroughly tractable, and not trusting in itself, abandons itself to Mary to be modelled and fashioned. How many stains, how many defects, how much darkness, how many illusions, how much of what is merely natural and human, there is in that first soul! How pure, how divine, how like to Jesus Christ is the second!

There is not, there never will be, a creature in whom God's power is more

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takes place only in Holy Communion), but because we participate in the same grace of which He possesses the plenitude. For, as Jesus Christ is the head of His mystical body, it is from Him and under His influence that supernatural life flows into us His members and there advances to maturity. He is therefore our Life. And, finally since by adoption and by grace, becoming the children of the Father, we are formed to the likeness of the Son, we may say with truth that Jesus Christ lives in us, since He reproduces Himself in us.

manifest, and in whom God's image is more perfectly reproduced than in Blessed Mary, not excepting either the saints, or the cherubim, or the highest seraphim in heaven itself. Mary is the Paradise of God, His unspeakable world, wherein the Son of God entered in order to watch over it and to seek His delight in it. God has made a world, the one in which we dwell, for man in his state of pilgrimage, and another, heaven, for man in his state of blessedness. But He made yet another for Himself, and to this He has given the name of Mary. It is a world that is almost unknown to mortals here below, and which is incomprehensible even to the angels and saints in heaven. Lost in admiration at the sight of God so high, so remote from them all, so withdrawn and hidden in His world, the divine Mary, they cry out without ceasing, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

**Happy, thrice happy, here below is the soul to whom the Holy Ghost reveals the secret of Mary,** in order that it may come to know Mary; to whom He opens this "Garden Enclosed," so that it may enter therein, this "Fountain Sealed," so that it can draw therefrom and drink deep draughts of the living waters of grace! This soul will find but God alone in this lovable Creature, God in all His holiness and grandeur, yet at

the same time infinitely condescending and infinitely holy, and conformed to the soul's weakness. God being everywhere, He may be found in all places, even in Hell itself; but there is no place in which the creature can find Him nearer to itself and more adapted to its weakness than in Mary, since it is for this end that He has taken up His abode in her. Wherever else He is found, He is the Bread of the strong, the Bread of angels, but in Mary he is the Bread of the children.<sup>1</sup>

Let no one imagine then, like some who have been led away by false lights, that Mary being a creature might form an obstacle to union with the Creator; it is no longer Mary who lives, it is Jesus Christ, it is God alone Who lives in her. As far as heaven is above the earth, so does her transformation into God surpass that of St. Paul and the other saints. She was made for God alone, and far from detaining a soul in the contemplation of herself, she,

<sup>1</sup> This beautiful thought is a rendering of the invitation of Divine Wisdom: "Come, eat My bread and drink the wine I have prepared for you."—(Prov. ix.) It also explains the unexpected graces which this devotion procures for those who persevere in it. It will be noticed that this method of spiritual formation is practically that of maternal training. In us are to be found the weakness and the wants of infancy; and in Mary, the tireless, the powerful love of a mother who foresees everything. We have but to cast ourselves into the arms of our Mother and remain in all things dependent on her.



on the contrary, impels it towards God, and unites it to Him more or less closely according to the degree of its union with her. Mary is the admirable echo of God. When we say "Mary" she answers "God," and when, with St. Elizabeth, we call her "Blessed" she magnifies God alone. If those who are falsely enlightened, and who have been sadly led away by the devil, even in their prayers, had known how to find Mary, and, through Mary, Jesus, and, through Jesus, God the Father, they would not have fallen so lamentably. Holy souls tell us that when we have once found Mary, and, through Mary, Jesus, and through Jesus, God the Father, we have found all good things, Inventa, etc. They say **all**, they except nothing; **all** grace, and **all** friendship with God, surest safety from the enemies of God, all truth as opposed to falsehood; the easiest and complete victory over the obstacles on the way of salvation; all sweetness and all joy amidst the bitterness of this life.

This does not mean that he who has found Mary through this true devotion to her, will be free from crosses and sufferings.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, he will be more

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<sup>1</sup> After having spoken of the aids to sanctification this perfect devotion will procure for us, Blessed de Montfort warns us against the illusion, which is common enough,

assailed by them than others are, because Mary, being the Mother of the living, gives to all her children pieces of the Tree of Life, which is the Cross of Jesus. But along with their holy crosses she gives also the grace to carry them with patience, and even with joy, so that the crosses she gives to those who belong to her are more like dainties, or crosses steeped in sugar, than bitter crosses. Or even if for a while they should taste the bitterness of the chalice, which must be drunk by those who would be the friends of God, the consolation and joy into which this sweet Mother presently turns all their misery, powerfully encourages them to carry still heavier, still more bitter, crosses.

**The difficulty is then to know how truly to find Mary in order to find all-abundant grace.** God, being absolute Master, can Himself communicate to us those things which He ordinarily does not communicate except through Mary, and it would be rash to deny that He sometimes does so. Nevertheless, according to the order established by Divine Wisdom He generally does not

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of picturing to ourselves a way free from labour and suffering. He himself is a striking example of the virile training that Mary, the Valiant Woman, gives to her children, and of the love of Jesus Crucified that she breathes into them.

communicate Himself to men, according to St. Thomas, in the order of grace, except through Mary. Therefore, to ascend and unite ourselves to Him, we must make use of the same means which He made use of to descend to us, in order to become Man and to communicate His graces to us, and this means is true devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

### ON PERFECT DEVOTION TO MARY.

There are several different kinds of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin; for I do not speak here of those that are false.

The first consists in performing the duties of an ordinary Christian, avoiding mortal sin, acting more through love than through fear, praying from time to time to the Blessed Virgin, and honouring her as the Mother of God without, however, having any special devotion to her.

The second consists in entertaining for her feelings of the greatest esteem, love, confidence and veneration. This urges us to join Confraternities of the Holy Rosary, of the Brown Scapular, to recite the five or the whole fifteen decades of the Holy Rosary, to adorn the statues and altars of Mary, to publish her praise, and to enrol

ourselves in her congregations.<sup>1</sup> This devotion, if we abstain from sin, is good, holy and praiseworthy, though not as perfect as the one which I am about to describe, nor is it as capable of withdrawing souls from creatures, and of detaching them from themselves to unite them with Jesus Christ.

The third devotion, which is known and practised only by very few, is the one about which I am going to speak to you, Chosen Soul. **It consists in abandoning oneself, utterly, and in the capacity of a slave to Mary, and through her to Jesus, so that everything we do, we do through Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary.**<sup>2</sup> I will explain these words.

We must choose some great feast on which, of our own free will and out of love

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<sup>1</sup> According to Blessed Grignon de Montfort these devotions demand of the faithful only a part of their time and certain practices of piety, while the one he proposes to us embraces our whole life and demands the entire sacrifice of ourselves.

<sup>2</sup> In this devotion we must be careful to distinguish two things: 1. An act of complete and unconditional consecration to Jesus through Mary; 2. A *state* of consecration consisting in an abiding disposition which makes us live and act *habitually subject to Mary*, in order to be united to Jesus. This is what is called the *spirit of this devotion*. This practice, which embraces the whole life seems, at first sight, so simple and unimportant that Blessed de Montfort aptly compares it to a mustard seed, for we cannot appreciate its vital energy and marvellous effects until, through persevering practice, it has grown strong in us. (See the *Tree of Life*, p. 45.)

alone, wholeheartedly, entirely, and without any reservation, to give, consecrate, and sacrifice ourselves to Jesus through Mary; that is to say, our body and soul, our exterior goods, such as house, family, income; and also the interior goods of our souls, namely, our merits, graces, virtues, and good works.<sup>1</sup>

Here we may remark that by this devotion we sacrifice to Jesus through Mary all that we hold dearest, and of which no religious order exacts the sacrifice, namely, the right of disposing of the value of our prayers, alms, mortifications and good works. This we do by leaving the entire

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<sup>1</sup> These words show us how comprehensive is this consecration, which the Blessed Grignon terms a perfect renewal of the baptismal vows. In it we actually renew, through the hands of Mary, our donation to Jesus Christ our Lord. We may here remark that by thus making over to the Blessed Virgin the value of our good works, we give to this consecration the same effect and merit as the *heroic act*, except, of course, that which is attached to the vow and its consequences. In a former edition the following words of explanation, taken from *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (pp. 84-85), were here inserted: "In a word, we must give her all we have, in the order of nature and in the order of grace, and all that may become ours in future in the orders of nature, grace and glory; and this we must do without any reserve of so much as one farthing, one hair, or one least good action; and we must do it also for all eternity; and we must do it further without pretending to, or hoping for, any other recompense for our offering and service, except the honour of belonging to Jesus Christ by Mary and in Mary, even though that sweet Mistress were not, as she always is, the most generous and the most grateful of creatures."

disposal of them to the Blessed Virgin, who will apply them as she thinks fit, to the greatest glory of God, which she alone knows perfectly.

We leave at her disposal all the satisfactory and impetratory value of our good works. In such a way that having made this oblation, though without any vow, we are no longer masters of whatever good we may accomplish; the Blessed Virgin is free to apply it at one time to a soul in Purgatory for its relief or deliverance, at another to some poor sinner that he may be converted, etc.

By this devotion we also place our merits in the hands of the Blessed Virgin; but this we do solely that she may guard, increase and beautify them, for we cannot communicate to another the merits of sanctifying grace, nor those that tend to our crown of glory in Heaven. But inasmuch as our prayers and good works are impetratory and satisfactory, we give them all to her to distribute and apply to whom she pleases, and if, after having thus consecrated ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, we desire, by our prayers, alms, mortifications, or sacrifices to relieve some soul in Purgatory, to convert some sinner, or to aid one of our friends we must humbly ask it of her and then rest content with what-

ever she decides, without even knowing what it may be, being sure that the value of our actions will be applied without fail to the greatest glory of God, when dispensed by that same hand which He uses to distribute His graces and gifts to us.

I have said that this devotion consists in giving ourselves to Mary in the capacity of a **slave**.<sup>1</sup> It must here be observed that there are three different kinds of **slavery**. The first is the slavery of **nature**; all men, both good and bad, are the slaves of God in this sense. The second is the slavery of **constraint**, in the way that the devils and the damned are slaves of God. The third is the **slavery of love and of will**; and it is by this slavery, as being the most perfect way in which a creature can give himself to his Creator, that we ought to consecrate ourselves to God through Mary.

Observe, again, that there is a great difference between a servant and a slave. A servant requires to be paid for his service; the slave receives no pay. The servant

serves only for a certain time, and is free to leave his master when he wishes; the slave has no right to leave, he is bound for life. The servant does not give his master the right of life and death over him; the slave gives himself up entirely, so that his master may take away his life without any fear of the law interfering. But it is easy to see that the slavery of constraint involves an absolute dependency which cannot exist by right, except in the case of a creature in regard to his Creator. This is why Christians do not make slaves; it is only Turks and idolators do so. Happy, a thousand times happy, is that generous soul who, having by Baptism thrown off the cruel slavery of the devil, now proceeds to consecrate **itself** entirely to Jesus, through Mary, in a slavery of love.

### ADVANTAGES OF THIS CONSECRATION.

I would require special light from God to describe adequately the excellence of this devotion. I will, therefore, content myself by briefly remarking:—1. In giving ourselves in this way to Jesus by the hands of Mary we imitate God the Father Who has not given us His Son except through Mary, and Who does not communicate His graces except through Mary. We imitate

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<sup>1</sup> This is the essential condition of this consecration. It presents us to Mary and to Jesus in a state of complete bondage and of absolute subjection to them; for, properly speaking, that is the real condition of a slave. But to take away any idea of degradation and tyranny from this holy and noble servitude, Blessed Grignon is careful to explain that it is a voluntary slavery, entered into freely and through love, and its fruit is the liberty of the children of God.

God the Son Who has not come to us except through Mary and Who, having given us the example, invites us to go to Him in the same way in which He came to us, namely, through Mary. We imitate the Holy Ghost, Who does not impart His graces and gifts to us except through Mary. "Is it not fitting," says St. Bernard, "that grace should return to its Author through the same channel by which it was transmitted to us?" 2. To go thus to Jesus through Mary is to honour Jesus Christ truly, because we thus acknowledge that our sins have rendered us unworthy to approach His Infinite Holiness directly and by ourselves, and that we have need of Mary, His Blessed Mother, to be our advocate and mediatrix with Him our Mediator. This is, at the same time, to approach Him as our Mediator and our Brother, and humble ourselves before Him Who is our God and our Judge; in a word we thus practise that humility which never fails to captivate the heart of God. 3. To consecrate ourselves in this way to Jesus through Mary, is to place in the hands of Mary all our good actions which, however good they may appear, are very often sullied and unworthy in the eyes of God before Whom the stars are not pure. Oh! dear Mother and Mistress, our poor little gift

is in your hands. Purify it, we beseech thee, make it holy, ennobles and embellish it so as to render it worthy of God. All the revenues of our soul are less capable of gaining the friendship and grace of God, our Father, than a worm-eaten apple offered to the King by a poor peasant would be as taxes for his farm. What would this poor man do if he succeeded in gaining access to the Queen? Would he not confide his apple to her? And would she not, in order to befriend the poor peasant and at the same time show her respect for the King, remove from it all that was bad or tainted, and put it in a gold dish decked with flowers? And could the King refuse to take it with pleasure from the hands of the Queen, who presents it in the name of the peasant? "*Modicum quid offerre desideras? manibus Mariæ tradere cura, si non vis sustinere repulsam.*" "If you have any trifle which you wish to offer to God," says St. Bernard, "place it in Mary's hands unless you wish to be repulsed." My God! how little is the best we can do! But let us then put it in the hands of Mary, by this devotion. As we shall have given ourselves as entirely to her as it is within our power to give ourselves, and have despoiled ourselves of everything in her honour, she will be infinitely more generous

to us, and in return for our little offering will bestow a great favour on us; she will give herself to us, she will share all, even her merits and her virtues with us, and she will place our presents on the golden dish of her charity. And, as Rebecca did to Jacob, she will clothe us in the beautiful garments of her eldest and only Son, Jesus Christ, that is to say with His merits, which she has at her disposal. Thus shall we, her servants and her slaves, after we have despoiled ourselves of everything in her honour, be clad in double garments: *Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus*:<sup>1</sup> that is, the vestments, ornaments, perfumes, merits and virtues of Jesus and of Mary clothe the soul of a slave of Jesus and of Mary who is stripped of self and faithful in his surrender.<sup>2</sup> 4. To give ourselves thus to the Blessed Virgin is to **practise charity in our neighbour in the highest possible degree**, for it is to give to Mary all that we hold most dear so that she may dispose of it as she wills in favour of the living

<sup>1</sup> All her servants were clothed in two-fold garments.

<sup>2</sup> This charming commentary, together with the preceding consideration on the beautiful thought of St. Bernard, will console and encourage those afflicted by the frequent proofs of their unworthiness and of the inadequacy of their labours! According to the favourite and happy expression of Blessed Grignon, Mary will be "their supplement" before God.

and the dead. 5. By this devotion we place our graces and merits and virtues in safe keeping, for we make Mary the depository of them, saying to her: "Guard, my dear Mistress, this good which, by the grace of your dear Son, I have been able to do. I am not able to keep it on account of my weakness and inconstancy, and because of the great number and the malice of my enemies who attack me by night and by day. Alas! As cedars of Lebanon may be seen each day fall into the mire, and as eagles after having soared up to the sun become birds of the night, so do a thousand of the just fall at my left hand, and ten thousand at my right. But do thou! Oh, my Powerful, my Most Powerful Princess, hold me lest I fall, guard all my goods lest they rob me of them, I confide to thy keeping all that I possess: *Depositum custodi*.—*Scio cui credidi*: I know well who thou art, and that is why I confide myself entirely to thee. Thou art faithful to God, and to men, and thou wilt not suffer anything to be lost of that which I entrust to thee. Thou art powerful and nothing can harm thee, or snatch away what thou holdest in thy hands.<sup>1</sup> *Ipsam sequens non*

<sup>1</sup> This consideration will appeal to those who are anxious about their perseverance in the state of grace and the work of their perfection. How many beginners

*devias; ipsam rogans non desperas; ipsam cogitans non erras; ipsa tenente, non corrui; ipsa protegente, non metuis; ipsa duce, non fatigaris; ipsa propitia, pervenis.*—(*Interfloris*, cap. 135; *De Maria Virgine*, p. 2150.)  
*Detinet Filium ne percutiat; detinet diabolum ne noceat: detinet virtutes ne fugiant; detinet merita ne pereant; detinet gratias ne effluent.*<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of St. Bernard. They express in substance all that I have said. Were there **only this one motive to encourage me in the practise of this devotion, that it is a sure means of keeping me in the grace of God and even of increasing it in me, should I not be consumed with love and ardour for it?** 6. This devotion makes us truly free with the liberty of the children of God. Since for love of Mary, we have of our own free will reduced ourselves to slavery, so this dear Mistress, out of gratitude, enlarges and dilates our hearts, and causes us to

are there not who waver or turn back through fear of failing or of not persevering!

<sup>1</sup>“With her for guide thou shalt never go astray; whilst invoking her, thou shalt never lose heart; so long as she is in thy mind, thou art safe from deception; whilst she holds thy hand, thou canst not fall; under her protection, thou hast nothing to fear; if she walks before thee, thou shalt not grow weary; if she shows thee favour, thou shalt reach the goal.” “She prevents her Son from striking, restrains the devil from injuring, keeps virtues from fleeing, merits from perishing, keeps graces from flowing away.”

walk with giant steps in the way of God's Commandments. She frees us from weariness, sadness and scruples. It was this devotion that our Lord taught to Mother Agnes of Jesus<sup>1</sup> as a sure means of deliverance from the intense sufferings and interior trials in which she found herself. “Make thyself My Mother's slave,” He said to her. She obeyed, and in that moment her troubles vanished.<sup>2</sup>

To authorise this devotion I would have to refer here to all the Bulls and Indulgences of the Popes and the Pastorals of Bishops in its favour, to the Confraternities established in its honour, the example of many saints and great personages who have practised it. But all this I pass over in silence.

## INTERIOR PRACTICE OF THIS DEVOTION.

I have already said that this devotion consists in **doing our actions through Mary**,

<sup>1</sup> A Dominican nun who died in the odour of sanctity in 1634, in the convent at Langeac, in Auvergne.

<sup>2</sup> The example of Mother Agnes shows that this remedy is not to be recommended only to timid, inexperienced souls who, through want of spiritual formation, have become scrupulous or faint-hearted. It can be used with similar success by the most advanced, whom God purifies by interior trials



**with Mary, in Mary and for Mary.**<sup>1</sup> It is not enough to have once given our selves as slaves to Jesus through Mary, nor does it suffice to do so every month, or every week, for this would be but a passing devotion which would not raise the soul to the perfection to which the slavery of Mary is capable of raising it. If this were sufficient there would be no more difficulty in embracing this devotion, and even in saying daily some vocal prayers as prescribed by it, than in joining a Confraternity. The great difficulty consists in entering into the spirit of this devotion, **which is to make a soul interiorly dependent upon and the slave of the Blessed Virgin and of Jesus through her.** I have found many persons who, with great fervour, have submitted to this holy slavery outwardly, but rarely have I met any who

<sup>1</sup> The order of words followed in this formula varies in the writings of Blessed de Montfort, sometimes even in the same article. According to the manuscript copy, it is in this instance "With Mary, in Mary, through Mary and for Mary," and the terms are explained in this order. After the example of Blessed Grignon, we do not attach much importance to these variations, and have thought it well to adopt throughout the sequence followed in *True Devotion* as being the principal commentary on these terms. This order is also the most logical because it suggests the idea of gradual progress in the union; *through*, indicating the way; *with the association*; *in the dwelling and union*; and *for signifying the end*.

have imbibed its spirit, and still fewer who have persevered in it.

1. The main point of this devotion is to do all our actions **through Mary**. We must never go to our Lord except through Mary, through her intercession, and her power with Him, so that our prayer to Him is never merely our own unaided prayer.

2. Moreover, we must do all our actions **with Mary**, that is to say, we must look on her as our perfect model in all we have to do. This is why, before commencing anything, we must renounce ourselves and our own views, however good they may be;<sup>2</sup> we must annihilate ourselves before God, acknowledging that we are incapable of anything supernatural or of any action that would tend towards our salvation. We must have recourse to the Blessed Virgin,

<sup>1</sup> This explanation is completed by the note in p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> These brief headings show that, according to Blessed de Montfort, the act of union with Mary comprises two things that are inseparable in the work of our salvation: 1. The putting away of obstacles (that is sin, or sinful inclinations), by renouncing ourselves. 2. The union of our will and our actions to the Divine Will, and to the impulse of grace. Without this renunciation which, when faithfully practised, extends to every place, person and thing, our union would be either imperfect or purely imaginative, and we would not be absolutely dependent on Mary. See on this subject the Notes 3, 4, and 5 on the cultivation of *The Tree of Life*. Observe also that in making us sacrifice all our views and intentions, however good they may be, in order to take up those of Mary, Blessed Grignon binds us to the practice of greatest perfection.

unite ourselves to her and to her intentions (though unknown to us), and through Mary we must unite ourselves to the intentions of Jesus Christ; that is to say, we must put ourselves as an instrument in the hands of the Blessed Virgin so that she may act in us, and do with us and for us as she thinks fit, for the greater glory of her Son, and, through her Son, Jesus Christ, for the glory of the Father; so that we take no step in our interior life or in our spiritual work embrace anything except in dependence on her.

3. We must do all things **in Mary**,<sup>1</sup> that is to say, we must accustom ourselves little by little to form a habit of recollection, so as to have in our minds a certain idea or mental picture of the Blessed Virgin.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The word *in* denotes an abode and an intimacy of union that all but constitutes unity. According to the expression of Blessed Grignon we must "enter and live" in the interior of Mary, into her views and her feelings. By our dependence on her, by her influence over us, Mary becomes, as it were, our air, our world, the place wherein we live and breathe; and if this disposition of ours is habitual, it will be our abiding place. Thus, provided we accept the condition in the sense previously explained, we are to all intents and purposes but one with the Blessed Virgin, and can truly say that we are *in her* or that *She lives in us*.

<sup>2</sup> St. Teresa indicates to beginners a similar method of practising recollection and uniting themselves to our Lord in prayer. She recommends likewise the use of pictures as an aid, and in this is in accordance with Blessed de Montfort, who with pictures, banners, crucifixes, and his staging, strove to elevate the soul to God by appealing to the senses.

She will be the Oratory wherein the soul will pray to God without fear of being repulsed; the Tower of David in which it will take refuge from all its enemies; the burning Lamp to light it on its way, and set it on fire with Divine Love; the holy Altar on which to see God in her and with her. In fine, Mary will be to us our one and all before God, and our refuge in all needs. When we pray it will be in Mary; when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion we will place Him in Mary to take there His delights. If we act it will be in Mary, so that everywhere, and in everything she will produce acts of self-renunciation.

4. Lastly, we must do everything **for Mary**, for as we are the slaves of this august Princess, we must work no more but for her, for her profit, and for her glory as our immediate end, and for the glory of God as our last end. In everything we do we must renounce self-love which nearly always imperceptibly insinuates itself as our motive, and we must often say from the bottom of our hearts: "Oh, my dear Mistress, it is for thee that I go here or there, that I do this or that, that I suffer this pain or that wrong."

## PRACTICAL ADVICE.

**Be on your guard, Chosen Soul, against believing that it would be more perfect to go straight to Jesus, straight to God.** If you do so, your work and your intentions will be of but little value; while if you go to Him through Mary, they will be the work of Mary in you, and consequently will be exalted and eminently worthy of being offered to God.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, beware of doing violence to yourself in order to feel and taste what you say or do. Speak and act in that pure faith which Mary had when she was on earth, and which, in due time, she will communicate to you. Poor little slave! leave the Beatific Vision, the transports, the joys, the pleasures, and the raptures to your Sovereign; and take, as your own portion, only a pure faith, full of disgusts, distractions, weariness and dryness. Say "Amen, so be it," to all that Mary, your

<sup>1</sup>This does not mean that we cannot speak directly to our Lord in contemplation, prayer, etc., nor that it is necessary to think actually and definitely of the Blessed Virgin at the beginning of each action. Though Blessed de Montfort has said clearly that an act of offering or consecration, even if renewed each month, each week (and we might even say each day), if it is but a *passing act*, does not establish us in the *spirit* of this devotion which is that it be *habitual*. He also observes that this turning towards Mary need only be "a general and imperceptible glance," and it is clear that a virtual intention is sufficient.

heavenly Mistress, does. This is the best you can do for the present.<sup>1</sup>

Be on your guard also against being distressed if you do not at once enjoy the sweet presence of the Blessed Virgin in your soul. This grace is not given to all. When God in His great mercy favours a soul with it, it can very easily be lost again if the soul is not faithful to interior recollection. If this misfortune should happen to you, return humbly to your Sovereign<sup>2</sup> and make ample amends to her.

## FRUITS OF THIS DEVOTION.

Experience will teach you the effects of this devotion far better than any words of

<sup>1</sup>This instruction is most useful for beginners, who are apt to think their acts are of no value unless accompanied by sensible sweetness. Blessed de Montfort reminds them that union with God is effected by an act of the will. This act, according to *True Devotion*, may be made interiorly or expressed in a few words. It is the work of a moment, a "glance," as it were, sufficing. As a matter of fact the prayer to Mary, at the end of the book, makes us ask for detachment from sensible perceptions.

<sup>2</sup>This presence of Mary is a favour enjoyed by Blessed de Montfort to an exceptional extent, as can be seen in his life. He is contemplating his own measure of enjoyment of the privilege when he says; "This grace is not given to all." Nevertheless he exhorts everyone to practise this perfect devotion, and without making any reservation promises as fruit "that the soul of Mary will be in us." It is true he imposes, as an absolute condition, a persevering practice of this devotion; and if this presence of Mary is not granted to all, it is because but few, even to a moderate degree, are faithful to its spirit.

mine can do; and, if you are faithful to the practice of the little I have taught you, you will reap such a plenitude of riches and of graces that the effects will astonish you and will cause your soul to overflow with joy. Let us work then, dear Soul, in such a way that by our faithful practice of this devotion the soul of Mary may be in us to magnify the Lord, and the spirit of Mary may be in us to rejoice in God her Saviour. These are the words of St. Ambrose: "sit in singulis anima Mariae ut magnificet Dominum, sit in singulis spiritus Mariae ut exultet in Deo." And do not think that there was more glory and happiness in Abraham's bosom than there is in the bosom of Mary, for, according to the learned Abbé Gueric, in it God has placed His throne. "Ne credideris majoris esse felicitatis habitare in sinu Abrahae, qui vocabatur Paradisus, quam in sinu Mariae in quo Dominus posuit thronum suum."

This devotion, when faithfully practised, produces numberless effects in the soul. Of these the principal one is that it so establishes the life of Mary in a soul here below that, to some extent, it is no longer the soul that lives, but Mary that lives in it and, as it were, the soul of Mary becomes our soul. Therefore, when by an indescribable but real grace Mary becomes

Queen of our soul, what wonders does she not accomplish therein! But, as it is generally in the interior life of a soul that she works great wonders, she works secretly, unknown even to the soul itself, for the knowledge of what was taking place would destroy the beauty of her works.

As Mary is ever the fruitful Virgin, she carries into every soul in which she is a purity of heart and of body, purity of intention and of purpose and fruitfulness in good works. Do not think, dear Soul, that Mary, the most fruitful of all Pure Creatures, and whose fecundity has gone so far as to bring forth a God-Man, could remain idle in a faithful soul. **She will make our soul live for Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ live in us.** "Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis."—(Gal. iv, 19.) If Jesus Christ is the fruit of Mary, in each particular soul, as He is in the world in general, He is, in a more especial way, her fruit and masterpiece in a soul in which she dwells. So that Mary, by the side of Jesus, becomes all to this soul; she enlightens its mind by her pure faith, deepens its heart by her humility, dilates it and sets it aglow by her charity, purifies it by her purity, ennobles it and enlarges it by her motherly care. But where shall I stop? Only experience

can teach these marvels of Mary, marvels beyond the belief of the wise and of the proud, and even beyond that of the ordinary lot of devout men and women.<sup>1</sup> As by Mary God came into the world the first time in humiliation and abasement, may we not also say that it will be by Mary He will do so in the second time, when He will come, as all the Church is in expectation, to reign over the whole world, and to judge the living and the dead?

How and when this shall be who can tell? But I know well that God, Whose thoughts are farther above us than heaven is above earth, will come in the time and in the way least expected by men, even by those who are most learned and most versed as regards the Sacred Scripture, which is very obscure on this point. We may further believe that towards the end of time, and perhaps sooner than we think, God will raise up great men filled with the Holy Ghost and with the spirit of Mary, and that through these this heavenly Queen will work wonders in the world, in order to destroy sin therein and establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ her Son over the

<sup>1</sup> It is owing to his long and profound experience of this devotion that Blessed Grignon is able to describe its effects so clearly and impressively.

kingdom of a corrupt world; and these holy men will attain their end by means of this devotion to the Blessed Virgin, of which, through my frailty, I have only feebly traced out the outlines.

### EXTERIOR PRACTICES OF THIS DEVOTION.

Besides the interior practice of this devotion, of which we have just spoken, there are exterior practices which we should neither omit nor neglect.

The first is, that on some special feast (preferably a feast of Our Lady) we give ourselves to Jesus Christ, by the hands of Mary, in whose service we have bound ourselves as slaves. On that day we should receive Holy Communion, and should devote the day to prayer. This act of consecration should be renewed, at least once a year, on the same day.

The second practice is to pay on that same day some little tribute to the Blessed Virgin as a token of our servitude and dependence, for it has always been the custom of slaves thus to pay homage to their masters. Now, this tribute may be either some mortification or an alms or a pilgrimage or some prayers. Blessed Marino—his brother, St. Peter Damian, tells us—took the discipline publicly every

year before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, on the day of his consecration. We neither ask nor even counsel such fervour; but, if we cannot give much to Mary, we should, at least, offer what we do give her with a humble and grateful heart.

The third is to celebrate with more than ordinary devotion, every year, the Feast of the Annunciation, for this is the principal feast of this devotion, which was established in order to promote the honour and imitate the dependence in which the Eternal Word placed Himself on this day, for the love of us.

The fourth exterior practice is to say every day (without, however, thinking ourselves bound under pain of sin) *the Little Crown of Our Lady*, composed of three *Our Fathers* and twelve *Hail Marys*, to recite often the *Magnificat*—the only hymn of praise of Mary's that we have—in order to thank God for His benefits and to obtain fresh favours from Him. Above all we must not fail to say the *Magnificat* as our act of thanksgiving after Holy Communion for, according to the learned Gerson, the Blessed Virgin recited it always as her thanksgiving after her Communion.

## THE CULTURE AND GROWTH OF THE TREE OF LIFE,

OR

## HOW WE MAY MAKE MARY LIVE AND REIGN IN OUR SOULS.

Chosen Soul, have you, guided by the Holy Ghost, understood what I have just said? If you have, thank God for it, for this secret is unknown to almost everyone. If you have found the treasure hidden in the field of Mary—the precious pearl mentioned in the Gospel—you must sell all you have to buy it; you must abandon yourself into the hands of Mary, and cast yourself safely into her, in order to find there God alone.

If the Holy Ghost has planted in your soul the True Tree of Life, namely, the devotion I have just explained to you, you must give all your attention to its cultivation, so that in due season it may bear its fruit. This devotion is the mustard seed spoken of in the Gospel, which from being indeed the least of all seeds becomes nevertheless greater than all herbs, and its stem shoots up so high that the birds of heaven, that is to say chosen souls, make their nests in its branches, and rest there, shaded from the heat of the sun, and hide in safety from the beasts of prey.

## HERE, CHOSEN SOUL, IS THE WAY TO CULTIVATE IT.

1. This tree, when planted in a truly faithful heart, needs always to be in the open air, that is without any human support. This Tree, being Divine, wishes always to be apart from any creature that might hinder its raising itself towards its Principal End, which is God. And so you must not lean on your own skill or on your natural talents, on your good name or on the protection of men. You must have recourse to Mary, and rely solely on her aid.

2. The soul in which this Tree is planted must watch over it unceasingly and, like a good gardener, tend it and look after it. For, as this Tree is alive and wishes to produce the fruit of life, it needs to be cultivated and enlarged by a continual look or contemplation of the soul; and thus a soul which aims at perfection must often think of it, and even make it its chief occupation.

3. The thorns and thistles must be cut off and rooted up, otherwise, as time goes on, they might choke this Tree of Life and prevent it bearing fruit. This means that we must be faithful to cut away and retrench all useless pleasures and frivolous occupations with creatures by mortification and

self-renunciation. In other words, we must crucify the flesh, keep silence, and mortify our senses.

4. We must be on the watch lest the caterpillars harm the Tree. These caterpillars are self-love and the love of ease, which eat the green leaves and destroy the fair hopes of the Tree to bear fruit, for love of self and love of Mary can never live together.

5. We must not allow the beasts of prey to approach. These beasts are sins whose mere touch can bring death to the Tree of Life. We must not even allow them to breathe upon us, that is to say, we must guard against venial sins, which are always very dangerous if we do not try to avoid them.

6. We must often water this Divine Tree: by saying our prayers piously, by going to Confession and Communion and by fervently attending other devotions, both public and private. Without this watering the Tree will cease to bear fruit.

7. We must not be troubled if this Tree is blown about and shaken by the wind, for it is necessary that the winds of temptation should blow in their efforts to make it fall, and that snow and ice should surround it in order to destroy it. This means that this devotion to the Blessed Virgin will



necessarily be attacked and contradicted; but, provided the soul is careful to cultivate it there is nothing to be feared.<sup>1</sup>

If, Chosen Soul, you thus cultivate the Tree of Life, newly planted in you by the Holy Ghost, I promise you that in a short time it will grow so high that the birds of heaven will dwell in it, and that it will become so perfect, that in due season it will yield its fruit of honour and grace, that is to say, the sweet and adorable Jesus, Who has always been, and always will be, the only fruit of Mary.

Happy is the soul in which Mary, the Tree of Life, is planted. Happier is that in which she has been able to grow and flower. Very happy is the soul in which she yields her fruit, but the happiest of all is the one in which she tastes and guards

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<sup>1</sup> Blessed Grignon, whose life offers such a striking example of these temptations and persecutions, speaks of them also in *True Devotion*. Père Lallement observes in *La Conduite Spirituelle* that the devil fears much more that a soul should apply itself to the pursuit of perfection, and to an interior life, than to certain acts of charity or zeal, though these are excellent in themselves. This is because imperfect souls generally do their best actions but imperfectly. Now, since this devotion forms us in interior life and unites us to Jesus Christ (in an easy, short and perfect way) it is not at all astonishing that the devil does all in his power to draw souls away from it. This is a more urgent reason for strengthening our will and confiding it to Mary.

her fruit until death, and then throughout eternity. Amen.

*Qui tenet teneat.*

God alone.

### PRAYER TO JESUS.

O most sweet Jesus, suffer me to pour forth my words of gratitude to Thee for the grace Thou hast bestowed upon me, in giving me as slave to Thy Holy Mother, in order that she may be my Advocate before Thy Majesty, and make up for all that is wanting in my great deficiency. Alas! O Lord, I am such a miserable sinner that without this dear Mother I should certainly be lost. Yes! I need that Mary should be with me when I am in Thy Presence, and wherever I may be. I need her to calm Thy just wrath, since I have so often offended Thee, and continue to offend Thee day by day. I need her to ward off the eternal punishments of Thy justice which I deserve. I need her to enable me to look at Thee, to speak to Thee, to pray to Thee, to approach Thee, and to please Thee. I need her to save my soul and the souls of others. In a word, I need her to help me always to do Thy Holy Will, and in all things to

seek Thy greater glory. Ah! would that I could publish throughout the world this mercy which Thou hast shown to me! Would that I might tell the whole world how, without Mary, I should be already lost! Would that I could offer Thee a thanksgiving worthy of such a benefit! Mary is in me! *haec facta est mihi.* O what a treasure! what consolation! And, if after this, I did not belong entirely to her, what ingratitude it would be! My Beloved Saviour, suffer me to die rather than this misfortune should happen to me, for I would rather die than live, except as belonging entirely to Mary. With St. John the Evangelist at the foot of the Cross, I have taken her a thousand and a thousand times as my very own, and as many times have I given myself to her. But I have not as yet done so as completely as Thou wouldst wish, dear Jesus! I do so now, as Thou wouldst wish me to do it. And, if Thou seest in my soul or in my body anything that does not belong to this August Princess, I pray Thee to root it up and to cast it far from me, for as it does not belong to Mary it is unworthy of Thee.

Oh Holy Ghost! grant me the grace to plant, water, and cultivate in my soul this sweet Mary, the Tree of the True Life, so that it may grow and flower and bring

forth the fruit of Life in abundance. O Holy Ghost! give me a great devotion, and make me seek for Mary, Thy Divine Spouse, that I may rest in her maternal bosom and have continual recourse to her mercy, so that in her, and by her, Thou mayest form Jesus in me, in a life-like way, great and powerful, until He reaches the fullness of His perfect age. Amen.

### PRAYER TO MARY.

Hail, Mary, Beloved Daughter of the Eternal Father! Hail, Mary, Admirable Mother of the Son! Hail, Mary, Most Faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost! Hail, Mary, my dear Mother, my sweet Mistress, my powerful Sovereign! Hail, my joy, my glory, my heart, and my soul! Thou art all mine by mercy, and I am all thine by justice. But I am not enough thine as yet! Once more, without keeping anything back for myself or for others, I give myself wholly to thee. If in me thou still seest something that does not belong to thee, I beseech thee to take it away now, and to make thyself absolute Mistress of all that I am, so that thou mayest destroy, uproot and annihilate all that may be displeasing to God, and plant, raise up and do in me all that may seem good to thee. May the light of thy

faith dissipate the darkness of my mind; may thy deep humility take the place of my pride; may thy sublime contemplation turn away the distractions of my wandering imagination; may thy continual sight of God fill my memory with His Presence; may the fire of charity in thy heart inflame the lukewarmness and coldness of mine; may thy virtues take the place of my sins; may thy merits be my ornament, and supply for all my deficiencies before Him. Lastly, most dear and well-beloved Mother, grant that I may have no other mind but thine to know Jesus Christ, and His Divine and Blessed Will; no other soul but thine to praise and glorify the Lord; no other heart but thine so that I may love God with a love as pure and burning as thine. I do not ask of thee either visions or revelations or relish or raptures, or even spiritual pleasures. It is for thee to see clearly, without any shadow, to taste without any bitterness, to triumph gloriously in heaven at the right hand of thy Son, without suffering any humiliation; it is for thee to command angels, men and demons as thou pleasest; and lastly, it is for thee to dispose of all that belongs to God, without reserve, according to thy will. I rejoice, O Divine Mary, that this is the good portion our Lord hath bestowed on thee, and will

never take from thee. For my portion here below, I wish for no other joy but the one thou didst have here, that is to say, to believe in pure faith, without relish or vision; to suffer joyously without consolation from creatures; to die to myself continuously, without a moment of interruption and without any profit for myself; to labour bravely for thee until death as the vilest of thy slaves. The only grace I ask thee in thy pure mercy to bestow on me, is that every day, and every moment of my life, I may say three times: "Amen:" "So be it," to all that thou didst do on earth when thou wast here; "So be it," to all that thou art now doing in heaven; "So be it," to all thou art doing in my soul, that thus there may be none but thee to glorify Jesus in me to the full, for time and for eternity. Amen. So be it.

### CONSECRATION TO JESUS THROUGH MARY.

O Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! O sweetest and most Adorable Jesus! true God and true Man, only Son of the Eternal Father, and of Mary ever Virgin! I adore Thee profoundly in the bosom and glory of Thy Father during eternity; and I adore Thee also in the virginal bosom of Mary,

Thy most worthy Mother, in the time of Thine Incarnation.

I give Thee thanks for having annihilated Thyself and taken the form of a slave, in order to rescue me from the cruel slavery of the devil. I praise and glorify Thee for having been pleased to submit Thyself in all things to Mary, Thy Holy Mother, in order to make me Thy faithful slave through her. But alas ! ungrateful and faithless as I am, I have not kept the promises I so solemnly made to Thee in my baptism, or fulfilled my obligations, and do not deserve to be called Thy child, nor yet Thy slave. And because there is nothing in me that does not deserve that in Thy anger Thou shouldst cast me from Thee, I dare not, by myself, approach Thy most Holy and August Majesty. I, therefore, have recourse to the intercession of Thy Most Holy Mother, whom Thou hast given me for a mediatrix with Thee. Through her I hope to obtain of Thee contrition for my sins and Thy pardon, and the grace to acquire and to preserve the gift of Wisdom. I salute Thee, then, O Immaculate Mary, living tabernacle of the Divinity, wherein the Eternal Wisdom willed to be hidden, and to be adored by angels and by men. I hail thee, O Queen of heaven and earth,

to whose empire is subject everything under God.

Hail, O sure Refuge of Sinners, whose mercy fails no one ! Hear the desires which I have of the Divine Wisdom, and for that end receive the vows and offerings which in my lowness I present to Thee.

I, N....., a faithless sinner, renew and ratify to-day in Thy hands the vows of my baptism ; I renounce for ever Satan, his pomps and his works ; and I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after Him, all the days of my life, and to be more faithful to Him than I have ever been before.

In the presence of the whole Heavenly Court I choose Thee this day for my Mother and Mistress. I deliver and consecrate to Thee, as Thy slave, my body and soul, my goods, both interior and exterior, and even the value of all my good actions, past, present and future, leaving to Thee the entire and full right of disposing of me, and of all that belongs to me, without exception, according to Thy good pleasure, and to the greatest glory of God, in time and in eternity.

Receive, O gracious Virgin, this little offering of my slavery, in honour of and in union with that subjection which the Eternal Wisdom deigned to have to Thy

Maternity, in homage to the power which both of you have over this little worm and miserable sinner, and in thanksgiving for the privileges with which the Holy Trinity hath favoured Thee. I protest that henceforth I wish, as Thy true slave, to seek Thy honour and to obey Thee in all things.

O Admirable Mother, present me to thy dear Son as His eternal slave, so that, having redeemed me by thee, by thee He may receive me.

O Mother of Mercy! get me the grace to obtain the true Wisdom of God, and for that end place me in the number of those whom thou leadest, and whom Thou nourishest and protectest, as Thy children and Thy slaves.

O faithful Virgin, make me in all things so perfect a disciple, imitator and slave of the Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ thy Son, that by Thy intercession and by Thy example, I may attain to the fullness of His age on earth and of His glory in heaven.  
**Amen.**

Qui potest capere, capiat,  
Quis sapiens, et intelliget haec?

“He that can receive this, let him receive it.  
“Who is wise, and he shall understand these things?”

God Alone.

## SHORT ACT OF CONSECRATION.

O Mary, my gracious and immaculate Queen, how happy am I to be thy loving servant. I consecrate, and give to thee my body and my soul, all that I am and all that I have, my natural and supernatural goods, my past, present and future possessions. I desire to gain all the indulgences I can gain, and I give them all to thee.

O Mary, my dearest Mother, I renounce my own will, my sins, my inclinations and my plans, and I fly to thee, I cast myself into thy heart all burning with love, hiding and losing myself therein, so that my heart, being fashioned in thine, my Divine Mould, I may pray, act and suffer always through thee, with thee, in thee, and for thee, for the greater honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. **Amen.**

### VENI CREATOR.

Come, O Creator, Spirit blest!  
And in our souls take up Thy rest;  
Come, with Thy grace and heavenly aid,  
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

Great Paraclete! to Thee we cry,  
O highest gift of God most high!  
O fount of life! O fire of love!  
And sweet anointing from above!

Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts art known;  
The finger of God's hand we own;  
The promise of the Father Thou!  
Who dost the tongue with power endow.

Kindle our senses from above,  
And make our hearts o'erflow with love;  
With patience firm, and virtue high,  
The weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,  
And grant us Thy true peace instead;  
So shall we not, with Thee for guide,  
Turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may Thy grace on us bestow,  
The Father and the Son to know,  
And Thee through endless times confess'd  
Of both th' eternal Spirit blest.

All glory to the Father be,  
With His co-equal Son,  
The like to Thee, great Paraclete.  
Till time itself is done.

(100 days indulgence each time.)

### PRAYER BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

My dear Mother, give me my Jesus! Lend me thy Heart, and receive Him thyself in me! Adore Him in me; petition and thank Him in my stead. Cause Him to live, increase, reign, and act in me. O my good Mother, spread His Kingdom also in the hearts of others and establish it ever more.

### MAGNIFICAT.

My soul doth magnify the Lord;  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name.

And His mercy is from generation to generations, to them that fear Him.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent away empty.

He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy.

As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Poitiers Edition of the *Secret of Mary*.

## AVE MARIS STELLA.

Hail, thou star of ocean!  
Portal of the sky!  
Ever Virgin Mother  
Of the Lord Most High!

Oh! by Gabriel's Ave,  
Utter'd long ago.  
Eva's name reversing,  
Stablish peace below.

Break the captive's fetters,  
Light on blindness pour,  
All our ills expelling,  
Every bliss implore.

Shew thyself a mother,  
Offer Him our sighs,  
Who for us incarnate,  
Did not thee despise.

Virgin of all virgins!  
To thy shelter take us!  
Gentlest of the gentle!  
Chaste and gentle make us.

Still as on we journey,  
Help our weak endeavour;  
Till with Thee and Jesus  
We rejoice for ever.

Through the highest heaven,  
To the Almighty Three,  
Father, Son and Spirit,  
One same glory be. Amen.

## Manner of Hearing Holy Mass In Union with Mary.

### RECOMMENDED BY BLESSED DE MONTFORT.

Mary speaks to the soul.

"When the priest begins the Holy Sacrifice, say with devotion, 'Behold I am on Calvary.' Recollect thyself inwardly so as to enter into My dispositions. . . . While the priest recites the *Confiteor* at the foot of the altar, think of the agony of thy Saviour Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom, in the Garden of Olives. . . . Make a short examination of thy sins, and in order to conceive a more lively sorrow, lift up thy heart to Me, and I will teach thee how to immolate thyself together with my Son."

### I. FROM THE INTROIT TO THE GOSPEL.

*How to praise and honour the infinite Majesty of God.*

"From the beginning of Mass to the Gospel, thou must busy thyself with rendering unto God the homage which is His due. But how canst thou do it? Knowest thou not that all the praises, the adoration of the angels and of the saints, even the praises and adoration which I myself ceaselessly offer to the Most Holy Trinity are as nothing before God, for He is infinitely great? Jesus alone, the Incarnate Wisdom, can give to the Eternal Father perfect worship, and this He does by His abasement in the Holy Sacrifice

*'Taken from the Poitiers Edition of the Secret of Mary.*



of the Mass. Offer then to Me the humiliation of My Son, and, for this purpose, humble thyself profoundly, renounce thine own disposition, and full of confidence and love, pray to Him in union with Me."

## II. FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE ELEVATION.

*How to make satisfaction to God for the sins of which thou art guilty.*

Mary to the soul.

"Cast a glance at thy sins and see what a debt thou hast contracted. One single mortal sin weighs more in the balance of the justice of God than all the good works of the saints, and even than the innumerable merits which by His grace I have been able to acquire. Nothing less than the Blood of My Son shed upon Calvary can appease the anger of God. While the priest is offering for thee at the holy altar His most precious blood, call to mind the tears which I myself shed for thee on Calvary as well as those which many and many a time I shed after the Ascension of Jesus, whether while passing along the Via Dolorosa at Jerusalem, or while present at the Holy Sacrifice, when it was offered by John My adopted son. Think of this, and mingle thy tears with Mine."

## III. FROM THE ELEVATION TO THE COMMUNION.

*How to thank God for the benefits which He has heaped upon thee.*

"Go over in thy mind the favours which God has heaped upon thee, even unto this day. They are

immense! . . . Ah! like Me you may often say with tenderest devotion and gratitude: '*The Most High hath done great things in me.*' And if He hath done so much for thee in the past, how much more will not this God of Goodness do for thee in the future! Call to mind that the only way to thank Him worthily is through the Heart of Jesus, which has come down now for this very purpose into the hands of the priest upon the Holy Altar. Contemplate with love this Saviour God, who is thanking His Father for thee; join with the Holy Angels and the Saints; but above all remember that I am there with thee, thanking God."

## IV. FROM THE COMMUNION OF THE PRIEST TO THE END OF MASS.

*How to ask for all the graces of which thou standest in need.*

"If thou hast not the happiness of approaching the Holy Table, fail not up to the end of Mass to make a spiritual Communion, which never fails to produce in the soul a close union with Jesus Christ. Imagine, as some of My servants have done, that I am giving thee the infant Jesus, who has just been born anew upon the Altar. Enlarge thy heart, for it is the Son of God who is making intercession for thee. Were I to assure thee that I myself would carry thy prayers to God, and would intercede for thee, what sweet confidence wouldst thou not have of soon being heard! But it is Jesus Himself, my well-beloved Son, Who is thine Advocate, and who is offering His own Precious Blood to the Father on thy behalf.

"Be not content to ask a few favours: imitate Me, ask great graces for thyself and for the whole world.

"When Mass is over, make a short thanksgiving. . . . Then leave the Church, as if thou wert going down from Calvary.

"Before going to her daily duties, St. Monica left her heart upon the Altar. . . . Do thou the same, leave thy heart in adoration; and during the day, remember that it is there close to Jesus. . . . This thought will give fervour to thy soul, and make recollection easy."

## OFFERING OF THE ROSARY.

*As taught by Ven. de Montfort.*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I unite with all the saints in heaven, and with all the just on earth, and with all faithful souls in this place. I unite with Thee, my Jesus, in order worthily to praise Thy Holy Mother, and to praise Thee in Her and by Her. I renounce beforehand all distractions which may come upon me during this Rosary, which I wish to say as modestly, attentively and devoutly, as if it were the last of my life.

We offer Thee, O Most Holy Trinity, the *Credo* we are about to recite in honour of all the mysteries of our faith; the *Pater Noster* and the three *Ave Marias* in honour of the Unity of Thy Essence, and of the Trinity of Thy Persons. We ask of Thee, lively faith, firm hope, and burning charity.

## Aspirations to Our Lady.

Mary!

25 days every time.—CLEMENT XIII., *Sept.* 5, 1759.

Hail Mary, full of grace, etc.

500 days, every time, if said when using a rosary enriched with the Crosier indulgences.

—LEO XIII., *March* 15, 1884.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

100 days, once a day.—PIUS IX., *Sept.* 30, 1852.

Our Lady of good studies, pray for us.

300 days, once a day.—PIUS X., *May* 22, 1906.

My Queen, my Mother, remember I am thine; keep me, guard me as thy property and possession.

40 days every time, when said in time of temptation.

—PIUS IX., *Aug.* 5, 1851.

My Mother, my hope!

300 days, every time.—BENEDICT XV., *Jan.* 9, 1917.

Compassionate Heart of Mary, pray for the sorrowing!

300 days for members of the arch confraternity for the dying.—PIUS X., 1907.

# VIRGO POTENS.

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE  
CRUSADE OF THE MIRACULOUS  
MEDAL.

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All who desire to show their gratitude to  
our Blessed Mother for having deigned to  
make known the Medal of her Immaculate  
Conception, as the special pledge of her  
protection, should take the monthly bulletin  
of favours bestowed through the Miraculous  
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